

Commission on Streamlining Government

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Advisory Group on Civil Service and Employee Benefits

Minutes of Meeting
Tuesday,
August 18, 2009

I. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Advisory Group on Civil Service and Employee Benefits was held on Tuesday, August 18, 2009, in the John J. Hainkel, Jr. Room at the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The chairman, Representative Jim Morris, called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The chairman called the roll and the following was noted:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Jim Morris, Chairman
Representative Mike Danahay
Lansing Kolb
Elizabeth Murrill

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

Laura Gail Sullivan, Coordinator
Ann Brown, Analyst
Michelle Pickering, Secretary
Camille Pampell Conaway, Governor's Office, Policy Adviser
Glark Gradney, Budget Analyst
Evelyn McWilliams, Fiscal Analyst
Karen LeBlanc, Senior Auditor

WITNESSES:

No witnesses

III. DISCUSSION:

Representative Jim Morris, Chairman, thanked the group for coming, stating that the meeting was going to be an informal one, basically just for introductions and to start collecting information to move the advisory group forward. He asked that each member state his or her name for the public, who they represent and to get an idea as to how they got to be here or anything else they would like the committee to know.

Lansing Kolb, Vice-President for Magnolia Management. They own and manage health care facilities. He said that the speaker of the house had appointed him to this Commission. He stated that he has a long history of involvement with the Republican party going back to the beginning. He was co-chairman of Governor Treen's successful campaign and that was how he became interested in government. He said that it was a pleasure to serve on this commission and hoped and prayed that the commission could do some good.

Elizabeth Murrill, Deputy Executive Counsel, a lawyer in the governor's office. She said that their office was interested in civil service and civil service reform and was delighted to be on this advisory group.

Representative Mike Danahay, District 33. He said that the reason that he was here was that during the past legislative session he was assigned the task, through a freshman group of legislators, to study civil service reform. He said that they came up with some very good ideas, working with the Civil Service Commission and staff, that was put forth in the legislature this year under HCR 6 which was a four point recommendation to the Civil Service Commission on how we could make some changes that were positive for the Civil Service Commission and for the work force of Louisiana.

Representative Jim Morris introduced the other staff members working on the advisory group. He said with the gathering of information that it had come to his attention that there was a tremendous amount of information that had been assembled by many different groups dating back decades. He stated that the advisory group was not going to try and re-invent the wheel. He said that the group would take the reports that have been there, formalize some ideas and incorporate them to help facilitate the gap between agencies and civil service to make sure that the employees had good sound benefits and to see what obstacles and hurdles are out there.

Shannon Templet, Director of State Civil Service. She introduced other members of her group, Jean Jones, Deputy Director; Craig Kimball, Attorney; Ranzy Montet, Chief of Accountability; Robert Boland, General Counsel; Judy McGimsey, Chief of Assistance Division; Shannon Duplessis, IT Director; Rainette Stephens, Director of Staffing; Paul St. Dizier, Chief of Appeals; and Kenyetta Sewell, Deputy Undersecretary.

Representative Jim Morris commented that he wanted to get rid of some of the ideas floating around that civil service was a dragon in some dark dungeon. He said that he did not like that perception and wanted to get away from it. He wanted to see civil service moved into the 21st century. Ms. Templet's organization had already made some changes in numerous areas. After looking at the information provided by Representative Danahay and HCR 6, he commented that the group had work to do. He said that Ms. Sewell had already gathered some information from those agency heads and felt that the job and task of the group was going to be to do away with the hurdles and other things that come between the agencies and civil service. He wanted this group to overcome those hurdles from the past reports and move forward.

Shannon Templet stated that civil service also wanted to take this opportunity to dispel any myths that were still hanging around and to make some real significant, meaningful changes to the Department of Civil Service if it was found to be necessary. She said that the department was aware that changes needed to be made.

Mike Danahay stated that he also wanted to see the myths dispelled. He stated that while doing research, it was recommended to him to go to the civil service director and staff to accumulate some information. When he arrived at civil service he was pleasantly surprised with how receptive the director and staff were. He said that it was his belief that they recognized that there were some changes that needed to be made. He said that they worked very well together and were extremely helpful in formulating what became the four points in HCR 6. He said that they had worked diligently and that the commission had already adopted some of the recommendations into the rules and regulations. He said that they were currently working on the other points in HCR 6. It was his belief that this was a move in the right direction and was very pleased to see it take place.

Laura Gail Sullivan introduced additional staff of the advisory group. She said that staff was currently in the process of gathering previous reports that had recommendations in them. Staff was going through those reports and picking out those recommendations that applied to this advisory group. Those recommendations will be analyzed to determine whether or not the recommendations were implemented and if they were not, why not, and if they were, how it went. Staff was also going to try and determine whether or not the implementation was continuing or if it was just for a brief time. She said that the collection and collation would be done by the staff. A bibliography would be compiled so that the commission members would be able to see all the documents if they wanted to see them directly. She said that a number of things would be put on the website, which was a joint legislative website which could be found in the upper right hand corner of the home page of the legislature that says streamlining government.

Jim Morris asked the members how they wanted to receive the information gathered by the advisory group prior to its meetings. It was decided among the members that the information would be provided to them via e-mails. He said he thought the group should start with the benefit aspect of each agency, the retirement systems, the Office of Group Benefits, the Louisiana Deferred Comp under the 457 plan and also the treasure's office of

social security as well as the numerous reports they had just received, some of those reports being SECURE. He asked that the group familiarize themselves with the Hay report and the Cut the Fat report for discussion at the next meeting. The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, August 25, 2009, at 9:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Representative Jim Morris made a motion to adjourn without objection. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Representative Jim Morris, Chairman

9/8/09
Date Approved